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Selected Speeches and News Releases

July 14 - July 21, 1988

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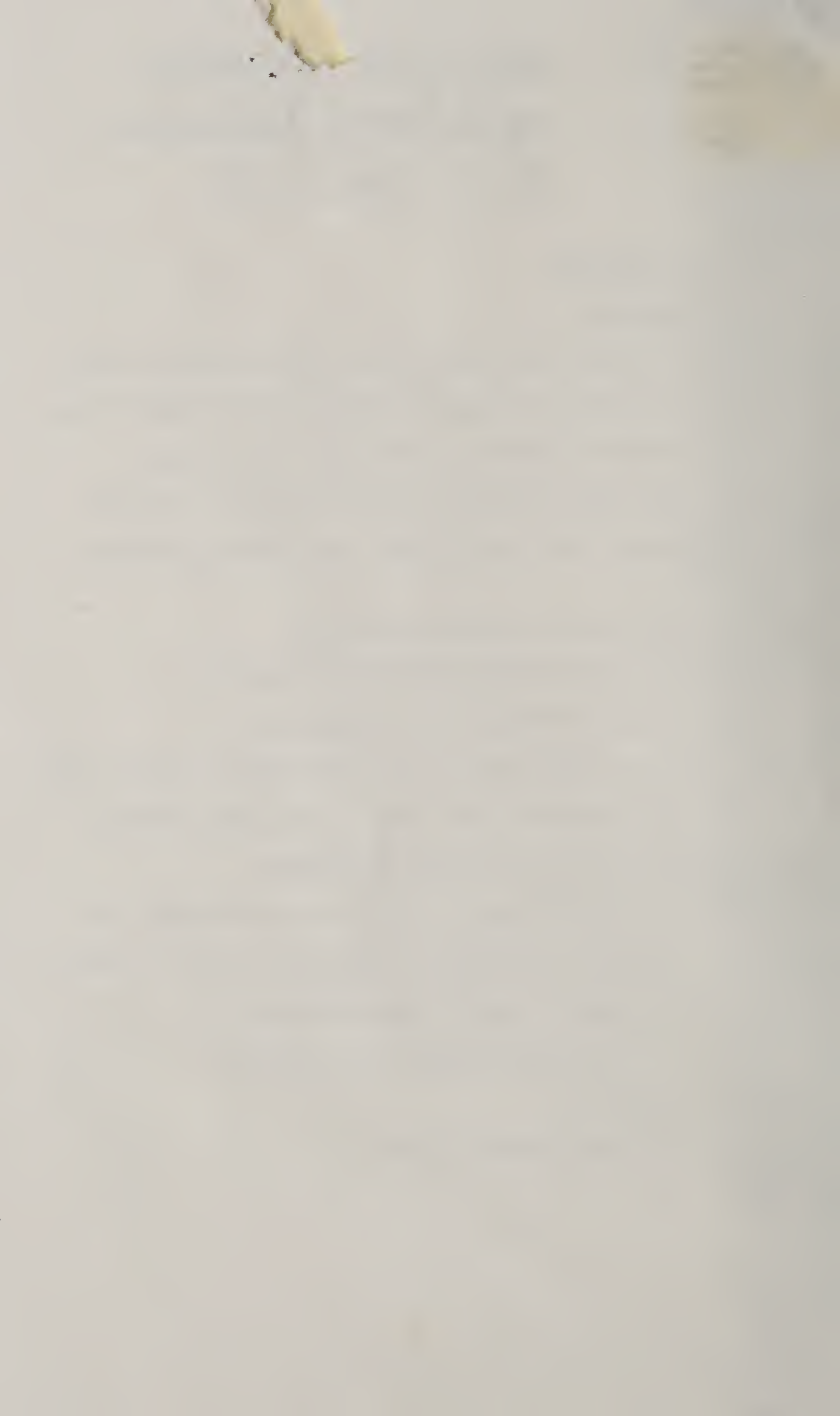
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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

USDA ANNOUNCES GRADE LOAN RATES FOR 1988 CROP BURLEY TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, JULY 14—The U. S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation today announced loan rates for various grades of 1988 crop burley tobacco which reflect the national average price support level of \$1.50 per pound and range from \$0.98 to \$1.63 per pound.

Milton Hertz, CCC executive vice president, said the national support level for burley is 1.2 cents per pound more than the price support level that applied to the 1987 crop.

He said the grade loan rates were developed in consultation with burley farm organizations and the two burley loan associations which administer price support programs for burley tobacco.

The tobacco associations deduct \$1 per hundred pounds from the loan advances to help cover overhead costs of the associations, Hertz said.

CCC will not provide loans on tobacco graded N2L, N2R, N2G, “U” (unsound), “W” (wet), “no-G” (no grade) or scrap.

1988 Crop Burley Tobacco Type 31, Price Support Schedule

Grade	Loan Rate	Grade	Loan Rate	Grade	Loan Rate	Grade	Loan Rate
<i>(Dollars Per Hundred Pounds, Farm Sales Weight)</i>							
B1F	163	B3GF	137	T4GR	124	X1F	163
B2F	161	B4GF	134	T5GR	121	X2F	160
B3F	159	B5GF	130			X3F	158
B4F	157			C1L	162	X4F	154
B5F	155	B3GR	137	C2L	160	X5F	147
		B4GR	132	C3L	158		
B2FL	156	B5GR	127	C4L	156	X4M	144
B3FL	154			C5L	151	X5M	138

Rate	Loan Grade	Rate	Loan Grade	Rate	Loan Grade	Rate	Loan
B4FL	148	T3F	153				
		T4F	146	C1F	163	X4G	125
B1FR	162	T5F	141	C2F	161	X5G	114
B2FR	160			C3F	159		
B3FR	158	T3FR	152	C4F	158	M3F	146
B4FR	156	T4FR	146	C5F	154	M4F	144
B5FR	154	T5FR	141			M4F	138
				C3K	145		
B1R	161	T3R	151	C4K	138	M3FR	141
B2R	159	T4R	146	C5K	132	M4FR	137
B3R	157	T5R	141			M5FR	132
B4R	155			C3M	154		
B5R	151	T4D	134	C4M	147	M4K	130
		T5D	126	C5M	140	M5K	124
B4D	138						
B5D	130	T4K	131	C3V	150	N1L	109
		T5K	127	C4V			
B3K	145			C5V	138	N1F	108
B4K	141	T4VF	134				
B5K	136	T5VF	127	C4G	132	N1R	111
				C5G	123		
B2M	155	T4VR	134			N1G	98
B3M	152	T5VR	129	X1L	162		
B4M	146			X2L	159		
B5M	141	T4GF	122	X3L	157		
		T5GF	119	X4L	153		
B3VF	150			X5L	146		
B4VF	144						
B5VF	138						
B3VR	146						
B4VR	143						
B5VR	137						

Tobacco graded N2L, N2G, “U” (Unsound), “W” (Wet), “No-G” (no grade), or scrap will not be accepted. Cooperatives are authorized to deduct \$1 per hundred pounds to apply against overhead costs.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE
FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, July 14—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 15, through 12:00 midnight Thursday, July 21.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1987-crop base quality loan rate of 52.25 cents per pound, the loan repayment rate for 1987-crop upland cotton during this period is equal to the loan rate for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. However, no coarse count adjustment will be applicable during the period because the adjustment is less than 1.00 cent per pound.

Based on data for the week ending July 14, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price	64.25
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	9.53
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.00
Average U.S. location	0.44
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-11.97</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	52.28 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price	64.25
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-58.50</u>
	5.75
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-6.25</u>
	-0.50
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made July 21.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

USDA REQUESTS COMMENTS ON 1989 UPLAND COTTON PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, July 14—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comments on provisions of the 1989 upland cotton program.

Decisions on the 1989 program provisions will be based on public comments, the most current data on U.S. and world crop conditions and the outlook for cotton supply and demand.

Comments are sought on the following:

- Which of the two plans for the marketing loan program, Plan A or Plan B, should be implemented and the loan repayment level under the selected plan;

- Whether first handler certificates should be issued and, if so, what restrictions should be placed on their use;

- Whether loan deficiency payments should be made to producers who, although otherwise eligible, agree to forego obtaining loans and, if so, the percentage to be made available in the form of negotiable marketing certificates;

- Whether CCC should establish an acreage limitation program and, if so, the percentage of the reduction;

- Whether CCC should establish a paid land diversion program and, if so, the percentage of the diversion and the payment rate;

- Whether to make recourse loans available to producers of seed cotton and, if so, the level of the loans;

- Additional provisions, including premiums and discounts for grades, staple and other qualities and the establishment of base loan rates by warehouse location.

Details of the 1989 upland cotton program will appear in today's Federal Register. A preliminary regulatory impact analysis on the 1989 upland cotton options is available and may be obtained by writing to Director, Commodity Analysis Division, USDA/ASCS, PO Box 2415, Washington DC 20013, or calling (202) 447-6696.

Comments must be received by September 12 and should be sent to the address above. All comments will be available for public inspection during regular business hours in Room 3756-S of USDA's South Building.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

#

USDA ASKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON HOT-IRON BRANDING OF LIVESTOCK

WASHINGTON, July 14—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking for public comment by Sept. 12 on regulations that require or allow animals to be hot-iron branded on the jaw.

James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the action is a result of a petition sent USDA by humane groups asking that it initiate rule-making proceedings to substitute freeze branding or comparable methods as the exclusive method for identifying animals infected with or exposed to brucellosis and tuberculosis.

"On Feb. 12, we published a notice advising the public that we had received this petition and were studying its suggestions," said Glosser. "We are now seeking input from the public to gain as much information on this subject as possible, and to help us decide whether to propose changes in the regulations."

APHIS administers programs to control and eradicate brucellosis and tuberculosis in cattle and bison. Brucellosis, also called Bang's disease, is a contagious bacterial disease affecting cattle, bison and other animals. It can cause sterility, slow breeding, abortion and loss of milk production.

Bovine tuberculosis is a contagious disease of cattle, bison and other species, including humans. Tuberculosis in affected animals causes weight loss and general debilitation.

Hot-iron branding on the jaw is used to identify animals that have been exposed to or contracted either disease. It is also used to identify certain cattle or bison that have been vaccinated against brucellosis.

Glosser said the petition to initiate rulemaking on these practices was filed on behalf of the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals the Animal Protection Institute, the Humane Society of the United States, the Fund for Animals, and the Massachusetts Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

He said the petitioners suggested that freeze branding, or a marking method comparable to freeze branding, be substituted for hot-iron branding as the exclusive method of branding animals under the two eradication programs.

The petition is available for public inspection at two USDA locations: Room 728 Federal Building, APHIS, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville,

Md., and at Room 1141-S, USDA, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C.

Notice of this action was published in the July 12 Federal Register. An original and three copies of written comments should refer to Docket No. 88-098 and be sent by Sept. 12 to APHIS-USDA, Room 1143-S, P.O. Box 96464, Washington, D.C. 20090-6464. Comments received may be inspected in that room between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Bonnie Aikman (301) 436-7799

#

USDA EXTENDS CRP SEVENTH SIGNUP; CERTAIN HAYED LAND MAY BE ELIGIBLE

WASHINGTON, July 15—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended the seventh signup for the 10-year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through Aug. 31. The signup begins July 18 and was scheduled originally to end Aug. 5.

Vern Neppl, associate administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said the extension will give producers more time to consider the effects of the drought.

Neppl said also that cropland which had been hayed in counties approved for drought relief is eligible during this signup for entry into CRP for the 1988 crop year if the land meets other program requirements.

Acreage designated as Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conservation Use for the 1988 program year is not eligible for entry into the CRP for 1988, he said.

Neppl said the total CRP contracts from the first six signups have enrolled more than 25.5 million acres. The USDA goal is to bring 40-45 million acres into the program by the end of 1990.

Under this conservation program, producers receive annual payments to keep highly erodible land out of production and planted with a protective cover which can include trees. In addition to the annual rental payments, CRP participants also receive up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing the vegetative cover.

Filter strips, cropland areas 66-99 feet wide with a permanent cover, next to streams, lakes and estuaries, will be eligible for CRP in the

seventh signup even if the cropland does not meet the soil erosion criteria, Neppl said. This provision was introduced in the sixth signup last February to permit farmers to use CRP enrollment as a cost-effective option to control nonpoint source pollution emptying into water resources.

Also, only one-third of the area to be planted to trees has to be predominantly highly erodible to be eligible for CRP. Neppl encouraged producers seeding grass to plant additional cover to protect wildlife and serve as windbreaks.

Producers interested in enrolling their cropland in CRP should contact their local ASCS county office.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

FARM POPULATION LOSS CONTINUES IN THE 1980'S

WASHINGTON, July 20—The rural farm population dropped by about one million between 1980 and 1987 to 4,986,000, according to a report by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau and the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.

The farm population declined an average of 2.5 percent per year during the 1980's, continuing a long downward trend. About 1 in 49 persons, or 2 percent of the U.S. population, lived on a farm in 1987, compared with 30 percent in 1920, when this information first appeared in census statistics.

The farm population consists of all people living on farms in rural areas. About one in 13 rural residents, or 8 percent of the 63,889,000 total rural population lived on farms in 1987.

Half of all farm residents lived in the Midwest in 1987, compared with about a third in 1950. The South was the most populous farm region until the mid-1960's, but the farm population there declined rapidly from its 52-percent share in 1950 to 29 percent in 1987.

- - -*Each Region's Share of Population*- - -

	All U.S. Residents		Farm Residents	
	1987	1950	1987	1950
	<i>Percent of U.S. Total</i>			
Northeast	20.7	26.1	6.1	7.8
Midwest	24.5	29.4	50.7	32.3
South	34.4	31.2	28.7	51.6
West	20.4	13.3	14.5	8.4

Whites formed a larger share of the farm population than of the nonfarm population. They constituted 97 percent of the farm population in 1987, but 84 percent of the nonfarm population. Blacks were 2.5 percent of the farm population but 12 percent of the nonfarm population. Hispanics (who may be of any race) accounted for 2.7 percent of farm residents but 8 percent of nonfarm residents.

There were more male than female farm residents: 109 men per 100 women on farms in 1987. There were 93 nonfarm men for every 100 nonfarm women. Farm residents' median age of 37.6 years compares with 32 years for nonfarm residents.

Only 2.9 percent of the farm resident labor force was unemployed in 1987 compared with 6.4 percent of the rural nonfarm labor force. Employed farm residents were a little more likely to work in nonfarm than farm occupations as their primary job.

These data, derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, are subject to sampling variability and other sources of error.

Farm population information is in Rural and Rural Farm Population: 1987, Census Bureau report series P-27, no. 61, released today. Copies are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Judith Kalbacher at USDA's Economic Research Service (202) 786-1534 can answer questions about the report's findings.

Mary Maher (202) 786-1512

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, July 19—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 11.13 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 10.33 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 10.25 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 5.56 cents per pound.

Minimum loan repayment rates for 1987-crop loans are the higher of the world price or 50 percent of the loan rate. For 1988-crop rice, the minimum repayment rates are the higher of the world price or 60 percent of the loan rate.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$6.69 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$6.42 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$6.23 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3:00 P.M. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made July 26, 1988 at 3:00 P.M. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-5954

#

HYBRID SEED CORN PRODUCERS GIVEN DROUGHT RELIEF

WASHINGTON, July 19—Producers may elect to plant hybrid seed corn and not have it considered a feed grain under the 1988 production adjustment programs, Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg announced today.

However, this hybrid seed corn may not be grown on acreage taken out of production under the 1988 production adjustment programs or on acreage enrolled in the long-term Conservation Reserve Program.

This additional acreage will not be taken into consideration when establishing subsequent feed grain crop acreage bases. Producers of hybrid seed corn who elect this option will not be eligible for 1988 feed grain program benefits on this acreage.

Goldberg said this action is being taken to offset effects of the drought on production of hybrid seed corn and to ensure that producers have an adequate supply of seed for next year's planting.

Interested producers should check with their county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office before planting to receive full details concerning this announcement.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

#

PRECISE DATA ON PLANT HORMONES COULD HELP SHAPE TOMORROW'S CROPS

WASHINGTON, July 19—Crops might be redesigned to make better use of their own hormones, says a scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture who has found a way to measure plant hormone levels more precisely than ever before.

“We’ve made a quantum jump in precision,” says Jerry D. Cohen of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. “We now need only about one percent of the plant tissue previously required for hormone measurements. That means we can zero in on specific parts of a plant.”

Like their counterparts in humans and animals, hormones in plants are natural chemicals that stimulate growth and development. Hormone levels in humans and animals are a lot higher, however, and can be measured more easily. According to Cohen, a peach bud has about one billionth of a gram of hormone; a drop of human blood has at least 10 times as much.

“Also, most human and animal hormones have singular, well-defined functions,” Cohen points out. “Plant hormones have multiple roles and control several processes at once. That in itself has complicated their measurements with some previous methods.”

Cohen, a biochemist with the Plant Hormone Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., reported on his improved method this month at the 14th International Congress of Biochemistry in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Precise data on hormone levels in the leaves, buds or roots of a plant, says Cohen, could facilitate the genetic engineering and breeding of crops for size, shape, ripeness and other characteristics highly dependent on hormone production.

“It may only be the first step,” he adds, “but it’s a big one towards the day we can improve the genetic code for hormone production in crops.”

At present, farmers spray hormone-like growth inhibitors and promoters on crops to get them to achieve a desired size, shape and ripeness by harvest time. But these sprays can be costly, don’t always work and have to be repeated each season. Also, Cohen says, some crops seem to sense that their development is being influenced unnaturally and adjust their own hormone production accordingly.

“Changing the genetic code could be more effective,” says Cohen, “because it would give the new hormone balances hereditary status. They become a natural part of the plant and show up in future generations.”

Cohen perfected his method for measuring plant hormone quantities while investigating a hormone known as indole-3-acetic acid, or IAA for short. IAA was the first plant hormone ever identified, and represents one of five major groups of hormones that are found in all plants.

“You could find maybe one ounce of IAA in 40 tons of plant tissue, if you look hard enough,” says Cohen. “And you have to be sure that you’ve found the real thing. There’s a lot of molecular garbage to sort through—a lot of molecules that appear to be hormones but aren’t.”

To determine IAA levels in tiny amounts of plant tissue, Cohen thoroughly mixed the tissue with a known quantity of modified IAA containing a carbon isotope—a form of carbon having a greater atomic weight than normal. He then placed a sample of the mixture in a mass spectrometer, which enabled him to distinguish the natural IAA from the heavy version and compare their quantities. Once he established the ratio between the two, he could determine the amount of natural IAA in the whole mixture.

“The use of carbon isotopes and a mass spectrometer makes the process work,” says Cohen. “Although we’ve been looking at IAA exclusively, there is no reason the same technique, possibly with other kinds of isotopes, won’t work for other hormones as well.”

Steve Miller (301) 344-3520

#

USDA SEEKING PATENT ON NEW PERMANENT PRESS FABRIC TREATMENT

WASHINGTON, July 20—Cotton fabrics with the wrinkle resistance of permanent press can be made with new chemical technology developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“We think our process opens up a new field that will allow textile makers to produce all-cotton shirts and other apparel that will have the cool feel of cotton, need little if any ironing, and still meet industry strength standards,” said Clark M. Welch, a chemist with USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. “The process works best with textiles containing 50 to 100 percent cotton.”

Welch and agency chemist Bethlehem K. Andrews, based at the agency’s Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, La., filed for a patent June 16 on a group of chemicals that produce permanent press, 100-percent cotton fabrics that dry smooth without wrinkles even after 65 washings.

Welch said the fabrics are about 20 percent stronger than permanent press cotton fabrics on today’s market. These fabrics have less strength when treated with chemicals now used to make permanent press clothing.

“Polyester or other fabrics are usually blended with cotton to add strength,” Welch said. “But polyester doesn’t absorb perspiration the way cotton does, so blended shirts don’t keep you as cool.”

The new fabric treatment has another advantage for consumers: they can take out or put in creases by ironing the fabric. This is difficult to do with permanent press material now on the market, Welch said.

It will be at least several years, however, before consumers find these items on clothing store racks. “That’s because the chemicals needed to make them won’t be available in large quantities at affordable prices for at least two years,” said Frank X. Werber, the agency’s textile expert at Beltsville, Md. “The chemicals are only available for research tests now.”

“But several chemical companies are working on methods to make these chemicals available at a competitive price. Once this happens, the textile industry will be very interested in using this process.”

Several textile mills have made and evaluated the new fabrics and “have confirmed our laboratory findings,” Welch said. Also, Cotton, Inc., a trade association sponsored by cotton growers, has tested the fabric treatment and says it has potential.

The new fabric treatment has another important advantage for the textile industry: formaldehyde isn't used. Federal regulatory agencies are pressuring the industry to minimize or remove formaldehyde from current permanent press fabrics because it can irritate the skin and eyes and has caused cancer in laboratory animals, Werber said. The new process uses chemicals called polycarboxylic acids, which are non toxic in laboratory studies.

The patent is on four groups of catalysts, or curing agents, that are used to quickly bind the polycarboxylic acids to fibers. The curing agents are similar to chemicals used in baking to control bread rising, and in water treatment plants to prevent calcium, magnesium and other chemicals from building up in pipes and boilers, Welch said.

In the new process, fabrics soaked in the polycarboxylic acids and the catalysts are then heated for about 15 to 90 seconds at temperatures ranging from about 300 to 500 degrees F. At those high temperatures, the acids unite with the fibers, forming cross links between the cellulose molecules of cotton fibers and giving wrinkle resistance to the fabric, Welch said.

"The catalysts are the key to our patent," he explained. "Polycarboxylic acids have been known for about 20 years but couldn't be used with previous catalysts. The new ones we're patenting speed up the reaction of the polycarboxylic acids with the fibers. Without them, the process could take an hour. At such high temperatures, the fabric would burn up."

Welch also said that in lab studies the new process gives off no vapors or odors and does not cause yellowing of the fabric. Previous attempts to use polycarboxylic acids caused off-colors and other problems, he said.

Also, the new fabrics could save the industry money because they can be dyed by certain kinds of dyes after being permanent press-treated. Welch said this is important because manufacturers can make clothing out of permanent press fabrics and dye the garments after they find out which colors are most popular with consumers. Textile makers now must dye first and then put in permanent press treatment, which means they sometimes have large stocks of certain colors that won't sell.

Sean Adams (301) 344-2739)

#

USDA CHANGES PORK ORDER IMPORT ASSESSMENTS

Washington, July 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will increase assessments on imported pork and pork products by one-hundredth of a cent per pound, effective Aug. 22.

J. Patrick Boyle, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the increase reflects the one-percent rise in hog prices paid at major U.S. markets this past year. The assessment increase is authorized by the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act of 1985, he said. The rate of assessment, one-quarter of one percent of market price, remains unchanged.

“Assessments on imported pork and pork products are established by formula each year, based on U.S. market prices for hogs,” Boyle said. “This change will bring importer assessments more in line with those being paid by domestic producers.”

The changes will appear as a final rule in the July 21 Federal Register. Copies and additional information may be obtained from Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs and Procurement Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2610-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

#

USDA BROADENS EMERGENCY HAYING PROVISIONS FOR DROUGHT AREAS

WASHINGTON, July 20—Ralph D. Klopfenstein, acting executive vice president of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation, today extended through Aug. 31 the period for emergency haying of acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

The CRP acreage must be in counties approved for emergency haying and grazing of Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conserving Use acreage.

Klopfenstein said the action was taken because of the “extreme severity of the drought.”

He said this means USDA will no longer require individual county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committees to apply for an extension of the 30-day period approved previously. Producers in counties

designated as eligible for this special program can get further details from their county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

USDA ANNOUNCES FINAL 1988 PRICE SUPPORT FOR SIX KINDS OF TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, July 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that the final price-support levels for the 1988 crops of six kinds of tobacco will be 1.4 percent less than the preliminary levels announced May 11. The six kinds of tobacco and the final price-support levels, compared to preliminary 1988 levels, are:

	1988 Support Level dollars per pound	
	Preliminary	Final
Fire cured (type 21)	\$1.188	\$1.171
Fire cured (types 22-23)	1.230	1.213
Dark air-cured (types 35-36)	1.047	1.032
Sun cured (type 37)	1.049	1.034
Cigar binder & filler types 42-44, 53-55)	.908	.895
Puerto Rican cigar filler (type 46)	.741	.731

Ralph D. Klopfenstein, acting, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said the reduction in the level of price support was made in accordance with amendments to the Agricultural Act of 1949 made by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987. These amendments provide for a reduction in the level of price support by 1.4 percent or, alternatively, for an imposition of an assessment on producers and purchasers of tobacco in order to achieve an equal reduction in outlays by CCC.

CCC will establish individual grade loan rates before the market season begins.

John C. Ryan (202) 447-6788

#

ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY AIDS COVERAGE OF DROUGHT NEWS

WASHINGTON, July 20—Live satellite videoconferences, news conferences using today's technology, electronic bulletin boards, computers that transmit news releases to print and broadcast media—are just a few of the innovative ways the Cooperative Extension System is getting information to farmers and others concerned about the current drought.

On July 13, for example, the Iowa State University Extension staff aired a two hour drought update at a videoconference and sent it, live, by satellite to thousands of viewers at 79 county Extension sites and to others with home satellite dishes in Iowa and out-of-state locations.

The program, produced by the Extension staff, focused on how the drought is affecting cattle and pigs, with information for farmers from Extension agronomists, economists and animal science specialists. An expert with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural and Stabilization and Conservation Service and an official of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources also were present.

After the program, Iowa residents could call 800 numbers for two hours to talk to ISU specialists. The Iowa Extension communications staff also used new desktop publishing equipment to produce six publications for distribution to county offices—a task normally requiring three months.

The N.D. State University Extension staff also has made use of new hardware to expand its news coverage of the drought. Staffers held a July 1 news conference in Fargo and, upon request, sent a news release, weather map and charts showing crop and other losses by telefax machine to Governor George Sinner in Bismark and to Representatives Byron Dorgan, Quentin Burdick and Kent Conrad in Washington, D.C. Two wire services in Kansas City also received the material. They also provided an audioconference option to out-of-town media.

All of this greatly expanded the reach of the campus news conference in Fargo. As a result, all three television network affiliates carried stories that night; the Fargo Forum carried a front page story.

The N.D. Extension System also is completing an interview series of four 15-minute videotapes on the drought and its effect on families. Copies of the series, "From Field to Family," will be available to the public through county extension offices.

Other state Extension Services in the Midwest using modern communication equipment to update their public on the drought include:

—Missouri, where staffers use computers and electronic bulletin boards to transmit drought information to 114 counties. Computers allow the quick delivery of news releases and drought advisories to wire services and major newspapers. Drought round tables by audioconference also are held by state specialists to discuss conditions on a county-by-county basis.

—Minnesota, where Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Peter C. Myers appeared live via satellite from Washington, D.C. on a drought special aired on WCCO - TV in Minneapolis. Local farmers and State Extension experts also participated in the 45-minute program, which followed the local news.

—Indiana, where the Purdue University Extension staff provides weekly satellite video drought updates for agricultural producers, agribusinesses, marketers and county Extension agents.

Betty Fleming (202) 447-3029

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NEW CATTLE HANDLING AND TRANSPORT VIDEO AVAILABLE

WASHINGTON, July 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Transportation and the Livestock Conservation Institute have jointly produced an 18-minute video demonstrating the proper techniques for handling and transporting cattle easily, effectively and humanely.

There are five basic elements of cattle behavior: Cattle vision, reaction to noise, flight zone, natural circling behavior and natural following behavior. The video shows how people can take advantage of these elements to move cattle without stress, thus producing fewer bruises, lower death and sickness rates and increased production efficiency. The video also shows the proper design of alleys, ramps and transport equipment that will help livestock handlers move cattle.

The video is designed to serve as a training aid to instruct animal handlers—whether feedlot workers, truckers or stockyard employees—to humanely move cattle from one location to another. Production practices with squeeze chutes are also featured, along with loading and transporting animals in trucks.

Copies of the video, in VHS format only, can be purchased for \$29.95, including postage and handling, from the Livestock Conservation Institute, 6414 Copps Ave., Suite 204, Madison, Wis., 53716; telephone (608) 221-4848.

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Backgrounders

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

USDA 1988 DROUGHT-RELATED ACTIONS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has compiled a chronology of actions and events relative to the 1988 drought from March 1 to the present. The first backgrounder on USDA drought-related actions was issued June 29. For the duration of the drought, updates will be issued on the 15th and 30th of each month, or the following working day. This update includes an insert for June 24 on an audio conference with state agricultural officials and then continues with events from June 30 through today.

March 1. Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng establishes USDA Drought Task Force under the chairmanship of Deputy Secretary Peter C. Myers. Members—agency administrators and key USDA personnel—will constantly monitor the potential drought situation. (USDA News Release 516-88.)

May 31. USDA announces that counties found to be suffering from drought will be allowed emergency haying and grazing of Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conservation Use Acreage (set-aside acres). At this time, haying and grazing provisions do not apply to Conservation Reserve Program acreage. (USDA News Releases 701-88 & 701A-88.)

June 9. USDA announces that standing hay on farms held in inventory by its Farmers Home Administration can be sold at a reasonable cost to help meet livestock needs in drought-stricken counties where state Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service committees have authorized release of set-aside acres for haying and grazing. (USDA News Release 743-88.)

June 14. Secretary Lyng briefs the Senate and House Agriculture Committees on the drought, and offers full USDA cooperation with the Congressional Drought Relief Task Force, announced this date by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Rep. Kika de la Garza (D-Texas).

June 15. The White House announces establishment of the Interagency Drought Policy Committee consisting of the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Army and Energy, Tennessee Valley Authority, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of the Vice President. The Departments of State and Transportation and the Council of Economic Advisers have since been added.

June 16. Secretary Lyng announces that producers in counties found to be suffering from severe drought will be authorized to harvest hay on land in the Conservation Reserve Program. Haying will be allowed for 30 days if farmers give up a proportional part of their CRP payments. Livestock grazing of this acreage is not authorized. At this time, the Palmer Long-Term Drought Severity Index is a factor in determining county eligibility. (USDA News Release 782-88.)

June 20. The Interagency Drought Policy Committee meets for the first time.

June 20. USDA starts making an audiotape of daily crop weather updates available to the media and others after 9 a.m. weekdays at (202) 447-2545.

June 21. USDA announces that haying will be allowed on Conservation Reserve Program lands if the county has been approved for emergency haying and grazing of Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conservation Use Acreage due to drought. This means USDA will no longer use the Drought Severity Index to decide if haying will be allowed. Other restrictions for haying of CRP acreage, announced June 16, still apply. (USDA News Release 802-88.)

June 22. Secretary Lyng participates in meeting of Congressional Drought Relief Task Force. A “statement of general agreements” issued after the meeting, states that administrative or legislative response to the drought should be based on assurance of continued adequate food supply and protection of the integrity of rural communities and their economies. The document called on the Secretary to implement various forms of disaster assistance, most of which already are authorized by law.

June 23. Secretary Lyng and governors from Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin discuss the drought at a meeting of the National Governors’

Association Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in Chicago. Other USDA officials at the session are Assistant Secretary Ewen Wilson, Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen, and Intergovernmental Affairs Director Jerry Barron.

June 23. During the National Governors' Association Chicago meeting, Secretary Lyng announces a toll-free drought hotline to deal with questions about federal government services available in drought-stricken areas. Lines (1-800-541-3375; 447-8455 in the Washington, D.C., area) will be in service from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturdays. (USDA News Release 820-88.)

June 23. Secretary Lyng briefs the president and vice president on the drought situation, and states that there is agreement among congressmen, senators, farm groups and governors that it is too early for emergency relief measures. Also attending the meeting were White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker, Deputy Chief of Staff Kenneth Duberstein, OMB Director James Miller, and Cabinet Secretary Nancy Risque. The Secretary also briefed the Cabinet in a meeting which followed.

June 23. The second meeting of the Interagency Drought Policy Committee takes place at USDA.

June 24. Deputy Under Secretary LaVerne Ausman and Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Jerry Barron talk to 41 state agricultural officials via audio conference from the USDA studios. All aspects of drought programs were covered with emphasis on the need for forage.

June 24. In its first day of operation, USDA's drought hotline logs more than 600 calls in 10 hours. At Secretary Lyng's direction, another 8 lines are added to the initial 10. The states with the greatest number of callers on the first day are Iowa, Wisconsin, and North Dakota.

June 27. USDA announces that special surveys of crop acreage will be taken in several states to ensure that USDA's July 12 Crop Production report reflects the drought's impacts. The July 12 World Agricultural Supply/Demand Estimates report, normally based on trend yields, also will take drought impacts into account. (USDA News Release 846-88.)

June 27. To help cattle producers hurt by the drought, USDA sets aside up to an additional \$50 million to purchase bulk ground beef for school lunch and domestic food assistance. (USDA News Release 848-88.)

June 27. In separate actions, Secretary Lyng authorizes additional emergency provisions for producers in counties suffering from severe drought. In counties approved for emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Use Acreage and Acreage Conservation Reserve, he permits producers to sell their hay to anyone. He allows harvest of Acreage Conservation Reserve, Conservation Use, and Conservation Reserve Program lands in eligible counties for green chop for immediate feeding to livestock or for silage. He permits oats harvested for forage from Acreage Conservation Reserve or Conservation Use Acreage to be green-chopped or used for silage through July 8. And he makes counties approved for the Emergency Feed Program automatically eligible for the Emergency Feed Assistance Program. (USDA News Release 849-88.)

June 27. The Interagency Drought Policy Committee meets for the third time, preparing its interim report for presentation to the president on June 30.

June 28. Federal and state officials announce establishment of a national hay information network—"HayNet"—to assist in locating available hay and identifying drought-stricken areas that need forage for cattle feeding. The action by USDA and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture will broaden state hay hotline efforts to the national scale with an electronic mail data bank. (USDA News Release 850-88.)

June 29. USDA announces it will hold a press conference at 3:30 p.m. on July 12, immediately following release of the July Crop Production and World Agricultural Supply/Demand Estimates report, on the report's contents, especially as they relate to the drought. Assistant Secretary for Economics Ewen Wilson, World Agricultural Outlook Board Chairman James Donald, and Administrator Charles Caudill of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, will brief the press in the Commerce Room of the J. W. Marriott Hotel. The U.S. Agricultural Communicators' Congress is being held at the Marriott, and USDA officials will brief the 600 attendees along with other local and national press. (USDA News Release 863-88.)

June 29. To help livestock and poultry producers hurt by the drought, USDA announces it has amended Mexico's GSM-102 Export Credit Guarantee Program so that country can buy U.S. frozen or chilled meat under the program. The action creates a \$40 million line of credit

coverage. (USDA News Release 869-88)

June 30. Speaking at USDA's Agricultural Products Quality Conference in St. Louis, Secretary Lyng says the best drought aid for farmers will be effective, bipartisan legislation. He also says the United States will continue to aggressively promote farm exports despite the drought's threat to grain supplies.

June 30. To provide further relief to farmers suffering from severe drought, USDA and the Interior Department approve emergency haying of certain Water Bank Program lands. Counties approved are those previously designated by USDA officials for emergency haying and grazing of Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conservation Use Acreage, and haying of Conservation Reserve Program land. The approval is effective July 1 in some counties, and July 15 in others. (USDA News Release 878-88.)

June 30. USDA's Office of Public Liaison devotes its regular briefing for trade associations and similar agricultural groups in Washington to the drought. This practice will continue every Thursday at 10 a.m. in Room 107-A of USDA's Administration Building as long as the drought lasts. The briefings are open.

June 30. As of the end of June, USDA has approved haying and grazing on Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conservation Use Acreage and haying on Conservation Reserve Program land in 1,715 counties in 35 states. Emergency Feed Programs (cost share) and Emergency Feed Assistance Programs (CCC inventory at 75 percent of loan) have been approved for 297 counties in 20 states, and 0/92 provisions have been approved for 48 counties in 13 states.

July 1. Secretary Lyng delivers the Interagency Drought Policy Committee's interim report to the president and briefs the White House press following their meeting. The committee meets at USDA late in the day.

July 1. USDA's drought hotline has received more than 3,300 calls in its first week of operation. States with the leading number of calls to date are Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Michigan, Tennessee, Ohio, Arkansas, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Kentucky.

July 6. Testifying before the House Committee on Agriculture's Subcommittee on Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed, Assistant Secretary for Economics Ewen Wilson says existing stocks of corn and wheat will help offset drought-related production shortfalls, but diminished stocks of soybeans and oats will mean tight supplies if the drought persists. He also meets on drought with the House Committee on Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Stabilization.

July 6. USDA announces that producers who donate all hay harvested off Conservation Reserve Program and Water Bank Program acreage in counties where these lands are approved for haying will not be subject to the previously announced 25 percent reduction from their next annual per-acre rental payment for the acreage hayed. Secretary Lyng said a producer must donate the hay through and obtain certification from an official of a designated state agency engaged in drought relief efforts. This official must certify that the donated hay has met requirements for exemption from the payment reduction. (USDA News Release 910-88.)

July 7. Secretary Lyng meets with governors and congressional officials from drought-affected states and urges Congress to move quickly on drought relief.

July 7. USDA announces that ASCS county committees can declare their counties eligible for aid under the Emergency Feed and Emergency Feed Assistance Programs. Each committee has the authority to make the declaration based on determination of substantial feed loss in the county. Previously, state and federal officials made these decisions. (USDA News Release 917-88.)

July 7. The Interagency Drought Policy Committee meets at USDA.

July 8. USDA's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs launches its nationwide electronic data bank, "HayNet," designed to provide state-by-state information on hay needs and availabilities via the Dialcom system.

July 8. USDA issues a statement that, contrary to rumors, producers will not be permitted to harvest grain on Conservation Use Acreage, Acreage Conservation Reserve, or Conservation Reserve Program land. Secretary Lyng reiterates that the requirement still is in effect for a protective cover on land taken out of crop production under the acreage reduction and conservation programs. (USDA News Release 926-88.)

July 8. By the end of its second full week of operation, USDA's drought hotline has received 5,200 calls. States with the most callers are Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Michigan.

July 11. Secretary Lyng and Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee Patrick Leahy share the luncheon speaker's podium at the U.S. Agricultural Communicators' Congress in Washington. A bipartisan approach to drought aid dominates the remarks of both officials. Later in the day, Vice President Bush also urges "whatever is necessary" to help drought-stricken farmers.

July 11. To help hog producers hurt by the drought, USDA announces plans to purchase ground pork for domestic food assistance programs using part of an additional \$50 million in Section 32 funds which USDA set aside on June 27 to help cattle and hog producers during the drought. Pork purchases will begin in late July. (USDA News Release 930-88.)

July 11. Secretary Lyng and leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees meet with President Reagan to discuss the proposed \$5.5 billion drought aid legislation.

July 12. Testifying before the Senate Agriculture Committee, Secretary Lyng says the drought aid legislation introduced by Senators Patrick Leahy and Richard Lugar offers equitable and compassionate assistance to drought victims.

July 12. USDA cuts estimates of U.S. grain production by about one-fourth from last year, one of the largest declines on record but not enough to cause food shortages or dramatic retail price increases. Assistant Secretary for Economics Ewen Wilson briefs the media on the Crop Production and World Agricultural Supply/Demand Reports at the Marriott Hotel in Washington, site of the U.S. Agricultural Communicators Congress.

July 13. Secretary Lyng joins President Reagan in meeting with state presidents of the American Farm Bureau Federation on the drought.

July 13. USDA announces that producers in counties not suffering from drought may harvest hay under various acreage reduction programs and the 10-year Conservation Reserve Program if they donate hay to farmers in drought-stricken areas. Previously, hay could only be taken from land

in counties approved for emergency haying or grazing of such acreage due to drought. (USDA News Release 943-88.)

July 14. Secretary Lyng accompanies President Reagan to drought areas of Illinois and Iowa. The president calls for comprehensive, nonpartisan disaster relief for all farmers and all crops and advocates forgiveness of repayment of advance deficiency payments and help for those farmers with nonprogram crops not covered by disaster relief. During the visit, the president announces that Secretary Lyng will lead members of the Interagency Drought Policy Committee and other officials on site visits of 10 states next week to assess the full dimensions of the drought.

July 15. USDA announces that the secretary's tour of drought-stricken areas next week will take the Interagency Drought Policy Committee and other officials to Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Missouri, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. The trip will cover three days from July 19 - 21. (USDA News Release 961-88.)

July 15. The second report of the Interagency Drought Policy Committee goes to the president. The committee also meets at USDA.

July 15. At the end of its third week of operation, USDA's drought hotline has logged 5,700 calls. Volume increased this date based on intense interest in the drought aid bills being considered by Congress. States with the most callers are Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan.

July 15. USDA's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs says 12 states have reported a need for hay and 8 have reported hay on hand in its second weekly "HayNet" compilation of nationwide information on hay supplies and needs. The information is available on the Dialcom electronic mail system.

July 15. USDA announces it has extended the seventh signup for the Conservation Reserve Program until Aug. 31 to give producers more time to consider the effects of the drought. Also, cropland which has been hayed in counties approved for drought relief is eligible for CRP for the 1988 crop year if it meets other program requirements. Acreage Conservation Reserve and Conservation Use acreage is not eligible. (USDA News Release No. 962-88).

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